DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 089 162 CG 008 754

AUTHOR Cunningham, Madonna Marie, Sister
TITLE The Older Student.
PUB DATE Aug 73
NOTE 12p.; Paper presented at the CASC Workshop on The Student and Campus Environment (Messiah College, August 10, 1973)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.75 HC-$1.50 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS *Adult Education; *College Programs; College Students; Daytime Programs; *Part Time Students; Program Descriptions; *Womens Education
IDENTIFIERS *Deferred Opportunity Education; DOE

ABSTRACT

Deferred Opportunity Education is a challenging opportunity by a small, day college in southeast Pennsylvania (OUR LADY OF ANGELS COLLEGE) to attempt to reach out to the adult women of the local community. The program permits any woman to return to college on a class schedule which has been tailored to her needs in terms of class hours, credits, length of time, etc. For women who still have young children (3-6 years), a large, educationally oriented Child Development Center has been built. It has its own professional staff and a full program is offered for children of women attending college. A special counselor who is conversant with the needs of adult mothers and working women is also an integral part of the program. Through consultation and guidance these women are able to maintain satisfactory accommodation toward the dual goal of wife and mother. (Author)

ED 089162

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

THE OLDER STUDENT

Sister Madonna Marie Cunningham, O.S.F.
President

OUR LADY OF ANGELS COLLEGE

Aston, Penna.

Presented at the CASC Workshop
on
The Student and Campus Environment

Messiah College, August 10, 1973

CG 008 754

INTRODUCTION

In the last ten years, the trend toward more diversified goals in post-secondary education and the resultant diversified student body on campuses has picked up tempo. This is particularly true of the increasing number of women seeking continuing education in the last five years. Adult women in all parts of the country are seeking educational opportunities adapted to their needs and interests. In response, more and more educational institutions are developing special programs for them. In 1971, the Women's Bureau of the United States Department of Labor reported 450 programs for women in higher education as compared with less than 250 reported in 1968. Even with this increase in support of the older student returning to college, the programs are not as yet meeting the needs of the students.

In the June 10, 1973 issue of College and University Bulletin published by AAHE, a joint statement on women in higher education appeared. The statement was developed by the American Association of University Women and endorsed by several other organizations. The first part of the statement deals with the special educational needs women have on college and university campuses. These needs involve recruitment, admissions, part-time study, financial aid, program flexibility, advising and counseling, placement, housing and student services. Campuses still do not seem to be

making the kinds of changes necessary for women to pursue post-secondary education.

The rising interest of nature women in returning to college is related in part to the greater desire of men and women in all age groups to develop their understanding of the complexities of modern life. There is wide-spread realization that additional education can bring deeper personal enrichment as well as job skills useful in the working world.

Various demographic factors help to explain the great interest of mature women in college attendance in the United States. And they indicate why the interest is even greater among women than among men over 35 years of age. These factors include women's early marriage age (median of 20.8 years in 1970), and the frequent changes in women's pattern of life, and their lengthened lifespan (an increase of 26 years between 1900 and 1970).

Significant numbers of women students leave college before they graduate in order to work and help finance the education of their husbands or to care for their homes and children. Women first-time college enrollees in degree-credit programs numbered 618,332 in the fall of 1965. However, only 321,197 women earned a bachelor's degree during the school year 1968-9. True dropout rates cannot be calculated from these figures because many of the freshmen were part-time students, some were enrolled in five-year programs, and others terminated their schooling after graduating from a two-year college. Nevertheless, it is significant that the number who

graduated is much smaller than the number who enrolled in college four years earlier. Thus it is evident that many of the women who did not graduate are potential "returnees" during their mature years.

When home and family responsibilities lessen, a considerable group of women find they have time to resume formal education. Freed from many housekeeping chores by modern inventions and discoveries, some are interested in returning to school for cultural or social reasons. Others wish to attain a higher degree, to up-date their professional skills, or to prepare for re-entering the work force. Refresher courses as well as courses that are completely new, can up-date job skills made obsolete by technological, scientific, or other advances. Women need opportunities to satisfy their yearning for self-development and expression. They want more collegiate education either to expand intellectual interests or to prepare for employment opportunities.

INVOLVEMENT WITH THE OLDER STUDENT AT OLA

Our Lady of Angels College (OLA) is a relatively young college for women, which began in 1965, primarily serving the Sisters of St. Francis from the adjacent Motherhouse. The College is a day campus located in the suburbs between Philadelphia and Wilmington, Delaware. In the Fall of 1970, serious questions were being asked about the College, as the number of Sisters decreased, and the recruiting of young women was not producing students at the same rate of speed.

In January of 1971, Dr. L. Richard Meeth was brought to the College as a consultant to help us, among other things, to define the potential ability of the College to acquire students, the kinds of students available, and the ways by which they might best be served.

At the suggestion of Dr. Meeth, a questionnaire was adapted and directed to the mature women. Six thousand questionnaires were distributed by the faculty and students in the local churches of all denominations, the schools and the shopping centers. From the returns a profile was made and a mailing list of the interested women developed. In his report to the Board of Trustees of OLA late in the Spring of 1971, Dr. Meeth said:

> Recent efforts to survey the older women of the community and design a program to meet their needs is one of the stars in the crown of the College. It is clearly evident from the initial survey that the older women would like to attend Our Lady of Angels College between 10 and 2 or 7 and 10 in the evening, twice a week, probably Tuesdays and Thursdays. It is strongly recommended that the College pursue this survey immediately by corresponding with all persons who returned it and by developing a flexible program that allows a person to pursue a degree on a part-time basis. Setting up a program for older women in the community is a way to increase faculty load and class size without increasing instructional or administrative costs and offers the greatest hope for the future of institution in terms of finding its mission and fulfilling it within Delaware County and the surrounding areas.

The academic dean, Sister Margarella, called two meetings of interested women during April and May of that year in order to work directly with the women in terms of what their needs would be in returning to College. On the basis of the questionnaires and personal meetings,

the following program was designed for the fall of 1971, with some improvements over the ensuing years.

D.O.E.: DEFERRED OPPORTUNITY IN EDUCATION PROGRAM

Recruitment and Admissions

1. Basic Skills Program: In our first meeting with the women, their high level of anxiety about coming to College, either for the first time or after many years, was very evident. In order to help alleviate some of the fears, a non-credit summer program in basic skills was initiated as a five-week program held two nights a week. (Program description in appendix). The course, which was advertised in the local papers, was designed to familiarize the women with the faculty and the facilities, and turned out to be a very effective recruiting technique. The majority of the women who have attended this course have registered in the College over the past three years. We are now putting a program in the fall of 1973 in the academic term for the first time in order to prepare those women who plan to enter the College in January.

2. Special Orientation: This year for the first time we scheduled a special orientation program in the first week of the semester for the D.O.E.'s. The purpose is to familiarize the women with the special services for them and introduce them to the already matriculating women at OLA.

3. Special Open House: A yearly special open house for the mature women is jointly conducted by the admissions personnel and the counselor for the women. There is much encouragement of the involvement of the husbands in this program, for their support is a major factor in the successful work of the married women in the College.

4. Admissions Requirements: Because of the length of time elapsing between the completion of high school or attendance at College previously and the woman's entrance into OLA, we have waived all entrance requirements except a high school diploma. At first this policy was enacted with some trepidation, but it has proved its worth. Even women with questionable high school transcripts are coming through as good students.

Financial Aid

Because so many of the older students are coming as part-time students, the College has now set aside some of its grant-in-aid funds for part-time students. Prior to this year, only full-time students could receive institutional funds. We have found the older student much more willing to take out a loan than will a younger student.

Program Flexibility

The survey of 1971 provided us with the class times most desired by the women. Contrary to common belief, the housewives preferred middle of the day hours. Working women preferred evening hours. The older students were scheduled in the same classes with the young students, but the core courses needed by both were scheduled between 10:00 A. M. and 2:00 P. M., as

well as between 7:00 and 9:00 P. M. More flexibility was allowed in course sequence so as not to cause unnecessary binds.

CLEP and other forms of challenging examinations are being used more and more frequently as the women begin to feel more secure. This is particularly true of the R.N.'s who are returning for the baccalaureate degree in Nursing. This year the women requested a mini-semester program to be offered after the close of the spring semester. They had their family life so attuned to their attendance at class that they did not want to break the pattern. Also, their school children were still in school sessions, so they could manage it. We met their request.

Special Personnel Services

1. Counseling and Placement: From the beginning, it was recognized that the older student required much more academic counseling than did the younger student. Her background was so different, and commitments in the home had to be considered. Ignoring these factors simply placed insurmountable obstacles in the way of the completion of any program. Student advisors were finding academic counseling very time-consuming and the academic dean likewise could not always provide the time that these women needed. OLA has now provided a part-time counselor for the women, a graduate of our own program.

   Personal counseling also places different demands upon the counseling services of the College. This year a special encounter group was arranged for the mature women who requested it.

The career orientation of the older woman has put the College in more contact with local business and social service agencies. The placement office is seeking more direct involvement from the local community in the placement of the women in jobs during and after their courses. They are a rich pool of stabilized personnel for local industry.

2. Child Development Center: At the very beginning of the D.O.E. program, it became evident that a child care center would be necessary in order to allow a great many of the women to attend College. A qualified director was employed and a small one-room building adjacent to the campus was rented in 1971. Overcrowding in the second year forced us to convert the third floor of the administration building for use of the children's program. The unfeasibility of these arrangements led to our search for building funds, and just this week our new Child Development Center will be completed, in time for the next semester. The size of the new building will allow for area children to be serviced as well as children of our own faculty and students.

The Child Development Center last year became a laboratory for child development in the Psychology major, allowing a practical experience on our own campus. The seminar for the practicum was conducted jointly by the psychology faculty and the center personnel. As a licensed center this semester, the program will be utilized by the nursing students and education students as one of their observation centers.

Already this service for the older students has opened up many new contacts with the local community social services, and is providing for the College another avenue of service to the area.

GROWTH IN OLA'S DOE PROGRAM

In 1970-71, the year before our study by Dr. Meeth and the initiation of the D.O.E. program, the total enrollment of the College was 262, half of whom were lay students. This fall, 1973, the enrollment will be over 400, about 90 per cent of whom will be lay students. This growth is not all due to the older student on campus, but the program accounts for some of the growth.

In the fall of 1971, 66 older students were admitted, 57% of whom were first admissions to College and 43% of whom were transfer students. The total number of older students registered in OLA in the program to date is 250. Nine per cent of these women have withdrawn, 19% have asked to remain on the records but have had to drop out for a semester or a year because of family responsibilities or financial difficulties, and 72% are actively pursuing their degree. Thirty-two of the women are full-time students and the remaining are part-time. Ten of the 32 full-time students made the Dean's list in the spring semester of this past school year. The College graduated one older student in 1972, two in 1973 and will graduate five in 1974.

The typical woman returning to college is in her 30's, although the age range reveals variations. At OLA, 24% of the women fall between the ages of 20 to 29; 44% between 30 to 39; 27% between 40 and 49; and 5% are over 50 years of age.

A large number of the older students are R.N.'s returning to work toward a baccalaureate degree. The next largest number have not declared a major, but want more education before making a decision. Most of these women are not career oriented. Another large group want the social sciences and are service-oriented. The remainder of the women are scattered over the various majors of the College.

FUTURE COMMITMENT TO THE OLDER STUDENT

OLA's experience over the past two years with the older student has been very positive. Their presence in the College has provided diversity to the student body, a challenge to the younger student and to the faculty, breadth and enrichment in their own lives, and headaches, struggle and reward to administration of the College. At this point in our history, OLA is definitely committed to serving the older student. We have learned that one cannot simply open one's door to them without special preparation, consulting, and planning with them, and the local community. If a college intends to provide education for the older student, it must build in flexibility and expect variations in the traditional approach to acquiring a degree. It must expect to provide different services from those needed by the younger student. The older student cannot (and will not!) completely fit into a system molded for an eighteen-year-old.

Now that we have worked through the major kinks in admitting the older student into the College and providing her with the education she wants, we have been stimulated to look at much broader fields. We are

now affecting the learning process in pre-schoolers, young and mature women, by means of our degree programs. What about the whole area of continuing education? What about non-credit courses, mini-courses, workshops, seminars, practicums? What about the "golden age" groups, inservice programs for professionals in the local hospitals and agencies' and businesses? As a day college, we are looking very seriously at our potential to service the educational and cultural needs of the people of the local community at many levels. We are enthusiastic about the challenge, movement and development entailed in broadening our vision and the vision of those whose minds and souls we touch, and whose minds and souls touch ours!

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE _____ PHONE _____

NO. CHILDREN _____ AGE OF OLDEST ___ YOUNGEST ___

INTEREST SURVEY IN D.O.E.*

DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU WOULD WANT TO ATTEND COLLEGE? ..... YES _____ NO _____

DO YOU FEEL THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE THE TIME TO RETURN TO COLLEGE FOR YOUR NEEDS, EVEN THOUGH IT MIGHT TAKE YOU SEVERAL YEARS? ..... YES _____ NO _____

WOULD YOU RETURN TO COLLEGE IF CHILDCARE COULD BE MADE TO SUPERVISE YOUNG CHILDREN? ..... YES _____ NO _____

WOULD YOU ATTEND COLLEGE AS A FULL-TIME STUDENT (12 credits) _____
PART-TIME STUDENT (1-6 credits) _____

IF YOU WOULD ATTEND A DAY COLLEGE, WOULD YOU NEED HELP WITH THE FOLLOWING:

TRANSPORTATION: YES _____ NO _____ FINANCIAL AID: YES _____ NO _____

IF YOU ATTEND COLLEGE, WHAT WOULD BE YOUR PREFERENCE FOR YOU:

DAY HOURS: ___ ___ ___ EVE. HOURS: ___ 6:30-7:45
___ ___ ___ ___ 8:00-9:30
___ ___ ___ ___ 7:00-8:15
___ 7:00-10:00

WHAT DAYS WOULD YOU PREFER TO ATTEND CLASS:

___ Every other day or eve. ___ Two consecutive days or eve.
___ ___ Three consecutive days or eve.

WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN ATTENDING A SPECIAL CLASS --the only all WOMEN'S CLASS IN COLLEGE HISTORY ..... YES _____ NO _____

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING MAJORS WOULD ATTRACT YOU TO A DAY COLLEGE (SELECT 2)

___ BIOLOGY ___ ___ ___ ___ HARMONICS
___ ENGLISH ___ ___ ___ ___ ART EDUCATION
___ HISTORY ___ ___ ___ ___ ELEM. EDUCATION
___ MATHEMATICS ___ ___ ___ ___ SEC. EDUCATION
___ BIOLOGY ___ ___ ___ ___ SPECIAL EDUCATION
___ SOCIAL ___ ___ ___ ___ PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

WE WOULD LIKE TO HELP YOU TO KNOW THE COLLEGE BETTER. MAY WE SEND YOU

___ MORE INFORMATION ___ AN APPLICATION

D.O.E. - Deferred Opportunity Educa[illegible]

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

OUR LADY OF ANGELS COLLEGE

Aston, Pennsylvania 19014

Syllabi for Basic Skills in Learning

Summer Program - 1973

DATES	CONTENT	INSTRUCTOR
July 3	Motivation for College Dealing with self-concept in adjustment back to College	Sister Madonna Marie
July 5	Classroom learning: Vocabulary building Functions of Text and audio-visual media	Sister Adele Francis
July 10	Viewing Filmstrip and Mathematics -- Uses of Laboratory Experiences	Sister Eleanor Augustine
July 12	Reading with a purpose Keys to increase skill and comprehension	Sister Adele Francis
July 17	Preface to writing	Sister Jeanette Clare
July 19	Thinking into writing	Sister Jeanette Clare
July 24	Introduction to library uses in College	Sister Anita
July 26	Skills in library uses to improve learning	Sister Anita
July 30	Examinations - Essay and objective tests - how to organize - how to organize study time	Sister Margarella
August 2	Achievement - standards of college study and value of routine Old fronts of study Use of recent advances	Sister Margarella